



Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Prince Rupert, British Columbia

This community report is part of the "Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in CIC's Western Region" study.

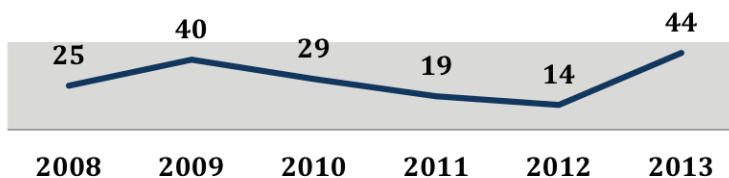


Population (2011): 12,508 residents

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

Permanent Resident Landings Prince Rupert 2008-2013

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA



Data sources: 5 Service Providing Organizations (SPOs) receiving funding from provincial, CIC, municipal, NGOs, private and other federal sources.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES



Top services offered

- Needs assessment and referral, language training, assistance with daily life and finding a job, educational upgrading, services for women and seniors, integration support
- Almost all services were indicated to be offered in Prince Rupert to some extent.



Key gaps identified

- Services for men
- Foreign credential recognition
- Almost all services need to expand.
- Organizational capacities for service provider organizations need to expand.



Barriers to access services

- Lack of information about services available and where to get help
- Language barriers
- Reliance on family members may further marginalize newcomers



Top services needed

Language training, integration support, health and mental health services, foreign credential recognition, greeting upon arrival, and information and orientation.



Services needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services

- Assistance with daily life
- Information and orientation
- Integration support
- Language training

PARTNERSHIPS



All the responding organisations in Prince Rupert indicated that they carry out activities related to settlement, welcoming, and integration in partnership with other SPOs.

Partnerships were identified with almost all listed partners.

Participants reported a desire for a partnership with police force, housing services, health services, municipal offices, businesses, foundations, and universities/research networks.

INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY



- Perceptions vary regarding how easy it is for newcomers to settle in Prince Rupert. Language difficulties, lack of information about services, lack of affordable housing are the main barriers. On the other hand, family support and a multicultural environment in Prince Rupert ease settlement for newcomers.
- Language barriers, lack of foreign credential recognition, discrimination, and lack of social networking make it "somewhat to very difficult" for newcomers to find jobs.

IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS IN CIC'S WESTERN REGION: Prince Rupert, British Columbia

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to better understand the settlement and integration services available to newcomers and to explore the service gaps and opportunities in Prince Rupert, British Columbia and 28 other rural communities across Western Canada. This research offers a current snapshot of Prince Rupert by providing information gathered from a sample of local service providers. It is not a comprehensive review of all settlement services in Prince Rupert. Data was collected in October 2014 from 5 organizations that serve newcomers in Prince Rupert through a telephone survey completed by a representative from each organization. Two organizations are CIC-funded agencies. One receives other federal funding, 4 receive provincial funding, and 1 receives municipal funding. Three are funded privately and 2 receive funding from NGOs. Although given one week to do so, no participant provided feedback on the preliminary survey findings contained in the draft report.

Background

Prince Rupert is a small port city in northern British Columbia. According to Statistics Canada figures, the 2011 population was 12,508, which represents a 2.4% decrease from 2006. Despite the reported decrease in overall population, CIC figures indicate that 171 newcomers arrived to Prince Rupert from 2008-2013.

Community Settlement Concerns

Despite the reported decrease in Prince Rupert's population prior to 2011, 4 respondents perceived an increase in the number of newcomers living in or near Prince Rupert in the last 5 years. They speculated that this could be due to current or potential future economic development in the region, and the expectation that economic expansion will increase the availability of jobs. When asked how easy it is for newcomers to settle in Prince Rupert, 3 respondents reported that it is "somewhat easy," while 2 thought it is "somewhat difficult." Factors that hinder settlement include language barriers and lack of information. Conversely, respondents felt that settlement is made easier by the presence of family members for many newcomers, and the historically multicultural environment of the small port city.

ACCESSING SETTLEMENT SERVICES

As with the ease of settlement generally, respondents were similarly divided over whether over 25% of newcomers find it difficult to locate the services they need in Prince Rupert: 3 agreed with the observation and 2 disagreed. Once again, language barriers, lack of information, and lack of affordable housing were cited as key reasons for difficulties. Reliance on family members was perceived to be both a help and a hindrance as family members provide critical support to newcomers but may be marginalised and therefore also lack good information. Respondents almost unanimously reported that all of the concerns about access to services listed in Appendix A have been raised in Prince Rupert.

GETTING JOBS

Four respondents indicated that it is "somewhat difficult" or "very difficult" for newcomers to find jobs in Prince Rupert. The main reasons for this are language barriers, lack of foreign credential recognition, discrimination, and lack of social network and connection to people in the community who can provide access to jobs or information about the local labour market. A number of respondents indicated that finding adequate and suitable employment depends on "who you know, rather than what you know."

Available Settlement Services

CURRENT SERVICE PROVIDER CAPACITY

Survey respondents indicated that their organisations primarily serve Permanent Residents (PRs), with a total of 28 served per month by the organisations together.

INVENTORY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Four of the 5 responding organisations offer the following services: needs assessment and referral, language training, assistance with daily life and finding a job, educational upgrading, services for women and seniors, and integration support. In addition, 3 respondents reported that they provide information and orientation, occupational mentorship and networking, and cultural events. Overall, every service listed in Appendix B was indicated by at least one respondent to be offered in Prince Rupert. However, 2 respondents indicated that services for men are needed but not offered.

When asked to indicate the most needed services for newcomers, respondents reported the following needs: language training, integration support, health services, including mental health, foreign credential recognition, greeting upon arrival, and information and orientation. With the exception of services designed specifically for men, which are not currently available, respondents reported that for the most part, although all of the services listed in Appendix B are available to some extent in Prince Rupert, they all need to expand.

NEWCOMERS INELIGIBLE FOR CIC FUNDED SERVICES

Respondents report that 3 Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs), 1 International Student, and 11 Naturalized Citizens are served per month in their organisations. In addition, 4 TFWs, 1 Provincial Nominee, and a number of visitors and people whose status was not known requested services in the month prior to the survey, but did not receive services. One respondent mentioned that, due to planned economic expansion concerned with Liquid Natural Gas, the number of TFWs is likely to expand significantly. Overall, respondents reported that the greatest needs of newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services include assistance with daily life, information and orientation, integration support, and language training. With respect to specific categories, respondents were almost unanimous that Refugee Claimants and Naturalized Citizens experience all of the needs listed in Appendix B. At least 3 respondents also reported that TFWs and International Students experience all of the needs listed. However, respondents were less likely to indicate the following needs: transportation supports for Naturalized Citizens, investment opportunities for TFWs, and investment opportunities, transportation supports, financial support, and assistance setting up a business for International Students.

Tracking and Planning

All survey respondents stated that their services for newcomers are guided by a strategic plan prepared jointly with other SPOs. Four organisations regularly assess the service needs of newcomers in their community; 2 do this internally, and 2 conduct assessments jointly with other SPOs, usually in quarterly meetings. Additional assessment methods include one-on-one meetings with other SPOs and formal and informal feedback from service users. Respondents also reported obtaining information from community reports, Statistics Canada, Chamber of Commerce data, and labour market reports. Respondents were not aware of an annual report on settlement achievements in Prince Rupert.

Specific Capacities

For the most part, survey respondents felt that they currently have adequate capacity for the organizational capacities listed in Appendix C, except: the provision of services in both official languages; creation of governing and strategic plan; mobilization of community to support newcomers; and financial support from government sources to maintain current services. However, they were almost unanimous in expressing a need for expanded future capacity in all of the areas listed in Appendix C.

Partnerships

The activities conducted in partnership were categorized into three groups; settlement (e.g., getting jobs and housing, daily functioning), integration (e.g., teaching labour rules and human rights), and welcoming (e.g., orientation to community, civic events). All the responding organisations indicated that they carry out activities related to settlement, welcoming, and integration in partnership with other SPOs. Regarding the specific nature of partnerships, almost all of the organisations surveyed partner with all of the partners listed in Appendix D. However, 4 respondents indicated a desire to partner with the police force, and 2 organisations indicated a desire to partner with housing services, health services, municipal offices, businesses, foundations, and universities/research networks.

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Appendix A – Possible Concerns about Access to Services

- Lack of services in community
- Confusion about where to get help
- Not being eligible for services
- Language difficulties
- Lack of childcare
- Transportation difficulties
- Hours of the day that services are offered
- Financial difficulties
- Discrimination because of being a newcomer
- Discrimination because of race or ethnicity

Appendix B – List of Possible Services

SETTLEMENT

- Greeting upon arrival/initial reception
- Information and orientation
- Needs assessment and referral
- Interpretation services
- Language assessment
- Language training
- Help finding housing
- Help with daily life (e.g., registering for school, getting a bank account)
- Transportation support

ECONOMIC

- Help finding a job
- Educational upgrading
- Recognition of foreign credentials
- Investment opportunities
- Job-specific language training
- Help setting up a business
- Occupational/business mentorship and networking
- Financial supports

SOCIAL

- Childcare
- Cultural Events
- Recreational services
- Legal support/referral
- Health Services
- Mental Health Services
- Social inclusion/ integration support
- Services for seniors
- Services for women
- Services for youth

Appendix C – Possible Organizational Capacities

- Staff to provide services
- Financial support from government sources to maintain current services
- Financial support from non-government sources to maintain current services
- Communication with stakeholders
- Coordinating services with other service providers
- Staff skills for delivery and maintenance of services
- Mobilization of community to support and welcome newcomers